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March 6, 2009

Testimony on the following Bill:

## HB No. 6551 AN ACT CONCERNING STATE FORESTRY PROGRAMS

Submitted by: Joan Nichols - President Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association, Inc.

Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association, Inc. is a non-profit trade Association representing the interests of the Connecticut forest products industry.

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and Members of the Environment Committee

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association strongly opposes the increase from ten to twenty five dollars per cord for any wood or timber sold as fuel off of state forest lands. The requirement to pay a minimum of twenty five dollars per cord for fuel wood would make any commercial firewood sale cost prohibitive. Woody biomass utilization is front page headlines across much of the United States and is regularly featured in almost all of the forest products trade publications. Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association regularly fields inquiries from power companies and consultants completing feasibility studies on woody biomass utilization in Connecticut. The foreseeable future is to look for alternatives to our dependence on foreign oil. While twenty five dollars per cord may be suitable for the small two and five cord sales that the Division of Forestry regularly sells to the homeowner market, it is not feasible for commercial forestry operations. The increase to twenty five dollars per cord could have a devestating impact on the management of state forest lands especially for Timber Stand Improvement sales where the overwhelming majority of material removed is fuelwood.

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association recommends amending the language of HB 6551 to read: "The commissioner shall charge no less than twenty five dollars per cord for any such wood or timber sold as fuel <u>on non-commercial fuelwood sales</u>." The price per cord for commercial fuel wood sales sold on a competitive bid basis should be sold at fair market value.

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association supports the deposit of the first \$600,000 derived from state timber sales to be deposited into the Conservation fund to support state forestry programs provided this threshold does not limit the volume of timber put out to bid in any calendar year.

Respectfully submitted,

an Nichols - President